

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate ~~[[the]]~~ an availability ~~of a user~~ to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer implemented method comprising:

receiving a first request from a second user to designate ~~the user~~ a do not disturb status ~~value~~ that is associated with the second user such that a group of ~~one or more~~ first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user;

receiving a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of ~~one or more~~ first users such that the subset of the group of ~~one or more~~ first users is authorized to initiate ~~[[a]]~~ the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of ~~one or more~~ first users cannot initiate ~~[[a]]~~ the new instant messaging session with the second user;

the second user receiving a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

displaying information associated with a buddy object within a window of the instant messaging application, wherein the buddy object represents an other user in the group of one or more users;

in response to receiving a request from the other user to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user, displaying information associated with the buddy object in the window of the instant messaging application indicating that the buddy object is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the user;

receiving a request from an other user to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user;

in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determining whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users;

in response to a determination determining that the other first user is not included in the subset of the group of one or more first users, denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and displaying a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and

in response to a determination determining that the other first user is included in the subset of the group of one or more first users, starting displaying chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

2.-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A computer program product stored in [[on]] a computer readable medium having computer usable program code for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate [[the]] an availability ~~of a user~~ to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer program product comprising:

means for receiving a first request from a second user to designate the user a do not disturb status value that is associated with the second user such that a group of one or more first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user;

means for receiving a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of one or more first users such that the subset of the group of one or more first users is authorized to initiate [[a]] the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of one or more first users cannot initiate [[a]] the new instant messaging session with the second user;

means for the second user to receive a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

means for determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

~~means for displaying information associated with a buddy object within a window of the instant messaging application, wherein the buddy object represents an other user in the group of one or more users;~~

~~means for displaying information associated with the buddy object within the window of the instant messaging application indicating that the buddy object is authorized to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user;~~

~~means for receiving a request from an other user to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user;~~

~~in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status,~~
means for determining whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users;

~~in response to a determination determining that the other first user is not included in the subset of the group of one or more first users, means for denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and displaying a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and~~

~~in response to a determination determining that the other first user is included in the subset of the group of one or more first users, means for starting displaying chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.~~

7.-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus~~ A data processing system for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate ~~[[the]] an~~ availability ~~of a user~~ to participate in an instant messaging session, the ~~apparatus~~ data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a storage device connected to the bus system, wherein the storage device includes a set of instructions; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to ~~means for receiving receive~~ a first request from a second user to designate

~~the user a do not disturb status value~~ that is associated with the second user such that a group of ~~one or more first~~ users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, ~~wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user; means for receiving~~ receive a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of ~~one or more first~~ users such that the subset of the group of ~~one or more first~~ users is authorized to initiate [[a]] the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of ~~one or more first~~ users cannot initiate [[a]] the new instant messaging session with the second user; receive, by the second user, a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; determine whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status; in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determine whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users; in response to determining that the first user is not included in the subset of the group of first users, deny the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and display a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and in response to determining that the first user is included in the subset of the group of first users, display chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

~~means for displaying information associated with a buddy object within a window of the instant messaging application, wherein the buddy object represents an other user in the group of one or more users, wherein the buddy object represents an other user in the group of one or more users;~~

~~means for displaying information associated with the buddy object in the window of the instant messaging application indicating that the buddy object is authorized to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user;~~

~~means for receiving a request from an other user to initiate a new instant messaging session with the user;~~

~~in response to a determination that the other user is not included in the subset of the group of one or more users, means for denying the new instant messaging session with the user; and~~

~~in response to a determination that the other user is included in the subset of the group of one or more users, means for starting the new instant messaging session with the user.~~

12.-15. (Canceled)